

Shakespeare abolished the absurd Jew altogether, and made a mad usurer one of the most dignified and delicate of his characters. Shylock defends the pound of flesh in whole passages of passionate rationality. He appeals, as Jews do still all over Europe, to the tremendous truisms of the human brotherhood, asking whether a Jew does not bleed when he is pricked and laugh when he is tickled. The conjunction of words is almost sinister in its suitability: for Europeans have alternately tickled the Jew and pricked him. And the same revulsion has always occurred in rotation: for while his blood was a black reproach, his laughter was always a maddening provocation. Yet this great speech of Shylock remains perhaps the finest thing ever written, finer even than Rousseau's, about the great unanswerable truth on the equality of men: the fact that every man has to die just as he has to sneeze; and that men are uncommonly alike in the presence of death or hunger or murder or the multiplication table. Yet while Shakespeare thus anticipated the sincere liberalism and humanitarianism of the modern Jew, he saw in him also more ancient and uncompromising qualities. He saw, for instance, his strict domesticity, the guarding of his daughter behind curtains and doors, with a really tragic solemnity and tenderness. Above all, he realised the sensibility of the Jew: that high, quivering self-respect by which he anticipates insults before they are offered, and the word "dog," uttered perhaps once or accidentally, echoes again and again in his reverberant soul like the howling of numberless hounds.

Now it happened that the rise of Shakespeare's glory through the eighteenth century coincided with the rise of republican humanitarianism, and also with the rise of the merely financial good fortune of the Jew. The red flag and the red shield happened to rise together. And though the red shield was still, in practical heraldry, charged with three golden balls; though, in short, the lucky Jew was still a usurer, as he had been in the Middle Ages, it became in our own time the fashion to praise all his virtues and palliate all his vices: partly through a just and general respect for his humanity, but partly also through a rather timid respect for his economic triumphs. Also, while solid Jews like Rothschild and Samuel were ruling the European market, really brilliant and creative Jews, like Disraeli and Lasalle, were fascinating the European mind. They generally fascinated it in the direction of very un-European things: Lasalle in the direction of Socialism; Disraeli in the direction of Imperialism. In this third epoch the character of Shylock took on a new treatment. Critics and actors went to the other extreme from the medieval gargoyle. So great an actor as Sir Henry Irving acted Shylock as if he were entirely noble and almost entirely right. So fine a critic as Sir Walter Raleigh writes of Shylock as if the tale of the pound of flesh were a tiresome accident tacked on to him: as if in all other respects Shakespeare meant him as a hero and a sage. We have boxed the compass from the medievalism that could see no good in the Jew to the modernism that can see no ill in him. But Shakespeare's Shylock has remained all the time: and Shakespeare's Shylock is right.

Shakespeare does mean that Shylock is a very fine fellow, with a great deal to say for himself, like Macbeth. He does mean that Shylock is a man and in many respects a good man. But he does also mean that his being a good man is seriously complicated by his being a Jew. He does mean, in other words, that he stands for a philosophy different from that of the Europeans around him. As Macbeth is poisoned by the morbid notion that success is fate, so Shylock is poisoned by the morbid notion that business is business. If we could manage to be half so magnanimous and moderate as this dead Elizabethan, we might yet solve a very real problem. Something will certainly be done to the Jew. Let us pray God it may be justice.

For Chronic Chest Complaints,  
Woods' Great Peppermint Cure. 1/6, 2, 6.

## CONSCRIPTING THE PRIESTS

### A GRAVE PERIL.

These stories, and countless others like them, that found their way into the papers, may or may not have been true (states the *Catholic Bulletin* of Dublin). There is nothing improbable about them. They are, in fact, the kind of things we should naturally have expected from men who stood so loyally together and endured with such sublime fortitude the savage persecution to which they were subjected up to the beginning of the war. But, true or fictitious, it is of importance to note that the incidents described were calculated to produce in the public a state of mind with regard to the Church and her ministers highly injurious to the best interests of religion. In some instances the stories of soldier priests have been written by Catholics, and given to the public with the best possible motives. An honest pride is taken in the heroism of those servants of God, and a deep sense of satisfaction is felt at the bright prospect of a religious awakening that is likely to be produced by the labors of those who have acquired increased influence among their countrymen. In other cases, the stories are published with the plain business-like motive of enlisting the sympathy and enthusiasm of the religious minded on the side of those who are giving priests an opportunity of showing how much they can suffer. But whatever the motive, the effect produced is the same. The accounts are so presented that people are blinded to the fact that the imposition of military service on the priesthood is in reality gravely injurious to religion: is indeed, an infamy of the darkest kind. Readers come to forget that it was prompted, and is maintained, not by military necessity, love of country, or any other reason that might carry with it some shadow of justification, that it was a callous, deliberate, and premeditated attempt to strike at the foundations of the Church's influence. The name of God has been erased from the child's books, de-Christianised teachers were in the schools, and it had been hoped, with much reason, that the generalisation and reduction in numbers of the priestly workers would complete the work of quenching the lights of heaven.

#### Priests Should Not be Forced to Bear Arms.

Those who are out of touch with the actual state of affairs, and are dependent on a specially-prepared diet of incidents for their knowledge, may be inclined to entertain delusions regarding the likelihood of the frustration of the designs of the enemies of the Church. Many have gone so far as to cite the existing situation as another evidence of the wonderful providence that draws good out of evil. Unfortunately, the French Bishops who have the interests of religion at heart, and who see things as they really are, have found no grounds for such optimism. As a matter of fact, the transitory and accidental good effects that meet the public eye serve only to increase the peril: for, as an eminent ecclesiastic commenting on this question, has said, "The devil is never more dangerous than when he comes clothed as an angel of light."

But has not the State the right to impose military service on the priests of the Church, just as it imposes taxes on them and subjects them to the other burdens that are shared by other citizens? It has not. Freedom from service in arms is one of those immunities or privileges that the Church possesses as a strict right, and which she must have if she is to fulfil her obligations to her Divine Master.

#### The Divine Right.

The immunities that the Church enjoyed in former ages were more extensive than those in force to-day. Some she has voluntarily allowed to fall into disuse; others she allows to be disregarded; but the right to exemption from military service she has never relinquished, nor could she relinquish it, even if she wished to do so. Up to the middle of the last century there existed a school of thought, comprising men who upheld the supreme right of the State in this as, indeed, many

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